

WASHINGTON, DC—U.S. Rep. Peter DeFazio (D-Springfield) announced today that the House Appropriations committee approved legislation which included \$100,000 for the Springfield School District's Academy of Arts and Academics. The funding was included in the fiscal year 2008 spending bill for the Departments of Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education.

The Springfield Public Schools (SPS) Academy of Arts and Academics (A3) is a small, academically rigorous high school with an emphasis on the arts. A3's curriculum blends rigorous academics with professional-level media, theater arts, and visual arts. The school uses arts-based projects that connect academic content and real-world issues, woven around core skills in math, science, and the humanities. Literacy is a centerpiece of the curriculum. Federal funding will enable the school to expand from its current enrollment of 90 9th- and 10th-graders to a rigorous arts-based small high school serving up to 250 9th- through 12th-grade students.

The school targets traditionally underserved students.

Early reports indicate retention levels that far surpass those of larger more traditional high schools.

"Springfield's innovative efforts to reach underserved students with a school blending traditional academic content with the arts shows great promise to make a difference in the lives of many students," said DeFazio. "Federal support is critical to ensuring that this program can reach its full potential."

The LHHS-ED spending bill will be considered on the House floor next week.